8.7.1974 coll. C.F"; other records came from near London, namely Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Surrey and Sussex. A further possible record came from Andrew Halstead at Royal Horticultural Society, Wisley, who unearthed an instance received on 10 May 1957 from a Surbiton (Surrey) garden on *Arbutus menziesii*; other records of aphids on *Arbutus* came in 1993, 1995 (3), 1998 and 2000 (3). A further record was that from Ruislip, Middlesex in 2000.

W. nervata arbuti belongs to a group of mainly host-alternating aphids, but some species, of which this is an example, has only one hostplant and which reproduces by parthenogenesis throughout the year without producing true sexual forms that would pair and lay eggs. There has been little sign of the insect since late June and the tree has freely regenerated growth from the attacked parts. No previous attack had been noticed in the life of this twenty-years old tree,

The nymphs are identifiable by swollen tubes with dark tips and the adults have dark bands across the abdomen (adapted from Aphids on the World's Trees by R. L. Blackman and V. F. Eastop CAB International, 1994). I found the adult's large wing etched venation to be attractive and dragonfly-like.

These Caston specimens are preserved in the Natural History Museum. I am grateful to Clive Carter for his advice and pursuit of records and to V.F. Eastop and A. Halstead for so kindly supplying them.— G. M. Haggett, Meadows End, Northacre, Caston, Norfolk NR17 1DG.

Last call for flea (Siphonaptera) specimens

The Biological Records Centre is planning to publish an enlarged second edition of the *Atlas of the Distribution of British Fleas*, originally published in 1974. For this to be as up-to-date as possible could readers send any specimens that they have for identification and recording. Providing they are accompanied by data any quantity, from singles to hundreds, all will be welcome, whether they come from cats, dogs, from bird nesting boxes to voles, rabbits, badgers, etc. Identifications will be given and the specimens incorporated in RSG's collection unless their return is required, in which case return postage would be appreciated. — R. S. (Bob) George, 54 Richmond Park Avenue, Bournemouth BH8 9DR.

***Tinagma balteolella* (Fischer von Roesl.) (Lep.: Douglasiidae) in the East Thames Corridor**

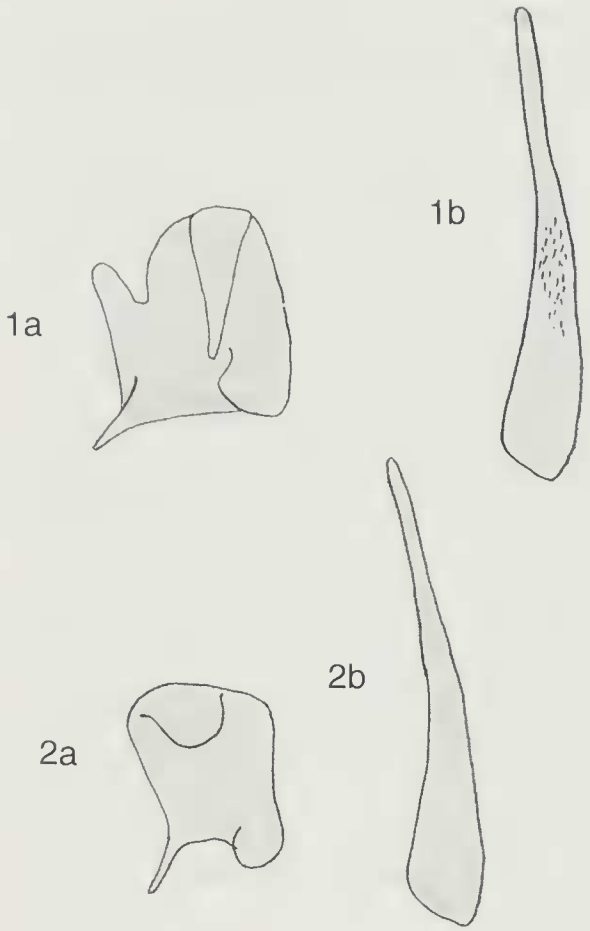
At around 11.00 hours on 17 May 2004, I netted two small and unfamiliar moths in flight over a few isolated plants of Viper's Bugloss *Echium vulgare* in weak sunshine at the site of the former Beckton Gas Works in East London (VC 18: South Essex). The insects, though somewhat metallic in appearance, were distinctive in having practically no markings whatsoever, save a small, pale tornal spot that was very obvious in the sunlight. Reference to Heath & Emmet (1985. *Moths and Butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland* volume 2. Harley Books) suggested that the moths might

be male *Tinagma balteolella*. Unfortunately, the usefulness of the early volumes of this series of books is severely limited, since they do not contain any drawings of the genitalia of most included species, and I am most grateful to David Manning for locating drawings in Falkovich & Medvedev (Eds.) (1990. *Keys to the insects of the European part of the USSR.* **4**: Lepidoptera), and for e-mailing me a scanned image. Dissection of one of my moths proved that they were indeed male *Tinagma balteolella*.

Tinagma balteolella was added to the British fauna by David Agassiz from the coastal sand dunes [at Sandwich] in East Kent (Agassiz, 1976. *Ent. Gaz.* **26**: 291 – 293) and for some years was known in Britain only from that locality. During 1987, Paul Sokoloff collected dead stems of the foodplant, Viper's Bugloss *Echium vulgare* from the shingle at Dungeness in order to breed out *T. ocnerostmella* and the following May was surprised to rear large numbers of adults of *T. balteolella* (Sokoloff, 1988. *Ent. Rec.* **100**: 152). As far as I am aware, the only other record for *balteolella* in Britain relates to adults collected by Norman Heal at Rye Harbour in East Sussex on 27 May and 2 June 1986 (N. Heal Pers. comm.). This discovery was reported by Richard Fairclough, who seems to have incorrectly given the year as 1985, but who himself found larvae in 1986, though failed to rear them through (Fairclough, 1989. *Ent. Rec.* **101**: 34).

The Beckton Gas Works site is a classic post-industrial site in the urban area of East London; it is scheduled for a housing development. The chemically contaminated ground is sparsely-vegetated save for a few areas where birch and sallow trees form small copses. In common with many sites in this region of East London/south-west Essex, the ground contains a high proportion of pulverised fuel ash (PFA), which renders it structurally similar to sand, albeit chemically base-rich. This type of substrate is of immense importance in this region because it supports nationally significant assemblages of aculeate Hymenoptera, amongst other taxa. Harvey & Plant (1996. A provisional list of the bees, wasps and ants (Hymenoptera: Aculeata) of Essex. *The Essex Naturalist* **13** (new series): 43 – 115) recorded 68% of the British aculeate fauna in this region, a figure that has risen now to around 75%. Many other Nationally Rare and Nationally Endangered taxa are thriving in this area, which extends east from London's Tower Bridge along the northern side of the Thames Estuary and which has become widely known as the East Thames Corridor. This area also includes the remaining former chalk pits and exposed areas of Thanet sand that overlie the Upper Chalk around Grays-Thurrock and was discussed in detail by Peter Harvey (Harvey, 2000. The East Thames Corridor: a nationally important invertebrate fauna under threat. *British Wildlife* **12**: 91 – 98). Viper's Bugloss still persists at several sites in the Corridor, though many of its former stations have been destroyed as the never ending march of new housing development continues to eliminate important and irreplaceable invertebrate habitats in the south-east of England.

Since the genitalia of neither British *Tinagma* species are illustrated in the British entomological literature, the opportunity is taken to illustrate the salient features here.



Simplified illustrations of left valvae (a) and aedeagi (b) of *Tinagma* species. 1. *Tinagma balteolella* (F. v. R.) Beckton, South Essex, 17.v.2004; 2. *T. ocnersotomella* (Stt.) – after Falkovich & Medvedev (1990).

For those who may wish to try to find this moth in new localities, it may be of interest that Paul Sokoloff (*op. cit.*) collected dead stems of the foodplant in autumn and left them hanging outside all winter, exposed to the elements, before bringing them indoors in late April (during 1988); his moths emerged from 9 May onwards.— COLIN W. PLANT, 14 West Road, Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire CM23 3QP (E-mail: cpauk1@ntlworld.com).

Spondylis buprestoides (Linnaeus, 1758) (Col.: Cerambycidae) found near a timber merchant in the Orpington area (Kent)

On the evening of the 22 vii 2004, I observed two black beetles at the base of a poplar tree at the edge of a common bordering the river Cray (O.S. grid reference TQ 467672). From a distance they appeared to be lesser stag beetles *Dorcus parallelipipedus* (L.) which are relatively common in the area. However, after capture, it became clear that the beetles had filiform antenna and were not stag beetles but a species of longhorn. Another specimen was found on a pine in a small church yard next to the common (TQ 468671). A further two examples were found at the first location the following evening.

The species is not native of the British Isles but was easily identified as *Spondylis buprestoides* using a French field guide (Auger, *Atlas des Coléoptères de France*, volume II, 4th edition, 1976, Boubée). Those beetles are shiny black, of cylindrical